

The Founding of Sulṭāniyya: A Mamlūk Version

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Source: *Iran*, Vol. 16 (1978), pp. 170-175

Published by: British Institute of Persian Studies

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4299658>

Accessed: 16-11-2016 19:45 UTC

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Jūzjānī, who visited Qūhistān three times, provides first-hand information on commercial relations between Qūhistān and north-west Afghanistan at a slightly later date. In 621/1224 he was sent by the ruler of the castle of Tūlak, east of Herat, to purchase goods, and clothes in particular, which were unobtainable locally after the Mongol depredations of the preceding years. At Isfizār he had to wait until the roads were safe for caravan traffic to resume. He visited Qā'in but made his purchases in Tūn. The next year he was sent to Qā'in, specifically to arrange for the re-opening of the caravan routes.¹⁵⁷

As has been said, the identification of Henry III's ten pennyweight pieces with the outsize coins of the Ghazna mint depends primarily on the similarity of their weights. Grierson suggests various ways by which they might have reached England. They might have travelled westward in the possession of people fleeing the Mongols, and so reached the Levant. That Ghūrid coinage was carried to the west in this way is highly likely. Nasawī, who died in Aleppo,¹⁵⁸ was only one of many refugees from the Khwārazmian empire, and, as Grierson says, some of them must have been able to take valuables with them. However, as we have shown, Ghūrid gold also moved west in other ways. The idea that Christian pilgrims could have brought the coins back to England is also plausible, but the existence of Ghūrid gold coinage in the treasury at Alamūt lends strength to Grierson's alternative conjecture, that the coins might have come to England as part of the funds of the "Saracen" embassy which was in Europe in A.D. 1238, vainly trying to persuade the kings of France and England to give assistance against the Mongols, and which principally represented the Ismā'īlī Imām.¹⁵⁹ Of course, nothing in Nasawī's description implies that he received exceptionally large pieces, but if the Ismā'īlīs were able to acquire Ghūrid gold pieces of one sort there is no reason to suppose they could not acquire those of another. The outsize ones are not particularly uncommon.¹⁶⁰ As Grierson points out, the fact that only two purchases of the unusual coins are recorded, within a short time of each other, indicates that the coins arrived as a single consignment. Obviously, the supposition that the coins were brought by the Ismā'īlī embassy is not susceptible of proof, but the timing is right. Assuming it is true, it is a fine example of the complicated paths that gold coin can take.

THE FOUNDING OF SULTĀNIYYA: A MAMLŪK VERSION

By Donald P. Little

It is generally agreed that the Il-Khanid capital Sultāniyya was founded by Arghūn (683–90/1284–91) and was completed by his son Öljeitü (703–17/1304–17). Arghūn is said to have begun construction of the city which was called Qongqur-Öleng as a summer residence in 689/1290.¹⁶¹ Though the town grew somewhat during the reign of Öljeitü's brother, Ghāzān (694–703/1295–1304), it was apparently not of great importance until Ghāzān was succeeded by Öljeitü, who, perhaps to commemorate the birth of his son Abū Sa'id (717–36/1317–35) in 704/1305,¹⁶² decided to enlarge

¹⁵⁷ *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāsirī*, II, pp. 122–5, 182–6.

¹⁵⁸ Minovi's edition, preface, p. *qāf-alif*.

¹⁵⁹ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, III, Rolls Series (London 1876), pp. 488–9.

¹⁶⁰ The main publications for Ghūrid coinage are the following: E. Thomas, *The chronicles of the Pathān kings of Dehlī* (London, 1871), pp. 9–32; H. Nelson Wright, *The coinage and metrology of the Sultans of Dehlī* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 5–14; *BMC O IX*, pp. 253–5; *BMC Indian* (The Sultāns of Dehlī), pp. 5–12; D. Sourdél, *Inventaire des monnaies musulmanes anciennes du Musée de Caboul* (Damascus, 1953), pp. 114–34.

Thomas, knowing only one of the large pieces, which he attributed to Yildiz (his No. 20, the same coin as our No. 2 described in n. 147 above), put forward the theory that it was a

medal issued in memory of Mu'izz al-Dīn. We now have similar pieces of Mu'izz al-Dīn himself and the comparative commonness of the outsize coins argues against their being medals of any sort. Probably their issue is to be explained as a consequence of the abundance of gold.

¹⁶¹ A. Godard, "The Mausoleum of Öljeitü at Sultāniyya", *Survey II*, p. 1103. D. N. Wilber's statement, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Il Khānīd Period* (Princeton, 1955), p. 139, that Arghūn began construction in 1270 is obviously a mistake. Qongqur-Öleng, as the second element in this Mongol name implies, is actually a plain, cf. J. A. Boyle, in *Cambridge History of Iran V*, pp. 399–400.

¹⁶² V. Minorsky, *EI*¹ art. "Sultāniyya"; no source is cited for this claim.

the city, which he renamed Sulṭāniyya, in order to make it his capital. The new phase of construction is said to have begun on 1 Muḥarram 705/24 July 1305, though other dates are also mentioned.¹⁶³ It was not until 713/1313–14 that the work was completed and the city was dedicated with celebrations attended by Iranian notables.¹⁶⁴ These data, as well as the considerable detail which is recorded on various aspects of the early city, are based almost entirely on Persian sources, the name most frequently mentioned being that of Ḥamd Allāh Mustaufī, a financial official in the service of the Il-Khans, who is assumed to have lived for a time in Sulṭāniyya.¹⁶⁵ In addition to the Persian sources, however, there are at least two contemporary Arabic sources which have not yet received the attention they deserve.¹⁶⁶ One of these, a brief report in Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 732/1331–32) encyclopaedia *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* was cited by d'Ohsson and Howorth.¹⁶⁷ Since this section of the *Nihāya* has not yet been published and since the short passage in question was only partially transmitted by the two Western scholars, I shall translate it in full:

Report on the city Qunghur Lāū, called al-Sulṭāniyya

The founding of this city was undertaken by Ghāzān, who concerned himself with its affairs before it was completed; then Kharbandā¹⁶⁸ commanded that it be populated. It is a city close to Kardkūh,¹⁶⁹ ten days' journey from Tabriz. In 713 we received news that it had been completed and that Kharbandā had moved to it from Tabriz a large number of merchants, wage earners (*muta'ayyishīn*), weavers, artisans, and others, forcing them to reside there. Then we had news that most of the weavers and the artisans had left, returning to Tabriz and the other places from which they had come.¹⁷⁰

This passage is significant for three reasons: (1) it dates the completion of Kharbandā's construction; (2) it indicates that there was difficulty in populating the city from the beginning; and (3) it gives the only indication, probably erroneous, that it was Ghāzān rather than Arghūn who actually founded the city. But in this article I wish to focus on another contemporary Mamlūk historian, who, in contrast to al-Nuwayrī, wrote at length about the founding and building of Sulṭāniyya and who has not been noticed by scholars at all. I am referring to Mūsā b. Yaḥyā al-Yūsufī (d. 759/1357–58), author of a biography of the contemporary Mamlūk sultan entitled *Nuzhat al-Nāẓir fī Sirat al-Malik al-Nāṣir*. Though most of this rich, extremely detailed work has not survived in the original version,¹⁷¹ extensive excerpts from it have been preserved in other sources, most fully in the chronicle *Iqd al-Jumān fī Ta'rikh Ahl al-Ẓamān* by Badr al-Dīn al-'Ainī (d. 855/1451). It is in this still unpublished work that al-Yūsufī's long account of the founding of Sulṭāniyya is contained.¹⁷² As will soon become evident, much of this account is undoubtedly erroneous; much of it is at variance with what is known from the Persian sources and from al-Nuwayrī, and much, being cast in the form of implausible anecdote, belongs to the realm of fiction. Nevertheless, al-Yūsufī recorded a core of information which may well contain an element of truth and deserves as careful consideration as the report of Mustaufī, whose memory, according to Godard, "was a little confused . . . when he wrote the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* in 1340" and who, moreover, exaggerated the importance of Sulṭāniyya because "he was writing as Öljeitü's Secretary of State and shaping his arguments accordingly."¹⁷³ Al-Yūsufī, on the other hand, had no need, or

¹⁶³ The Muḥarram 705 date is traceable to d'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols* IV (The Hague, 1835), p. 485, who does not identify his source. It is repeated by J. F. Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der Ilchane* II (Darmstadt, 1842–43), p. 187; H. H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols* III (London, 1888), p. 581; and Godard, op. cit., p. 1103. Vaṣṣaf, *Tahrir-i Tārikh-i Vaṣṣaf*, ed. 'Abd al-Muḥammad Āyatī (Tehran, 1967), p. 277, gives 704/1304–5 as the date of Öljeitü's construction. B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran* (Berlin, 1955), pp. 449–50, citing several Persian historians, mentions 706 and 707/1306–08.

¹⁶⁴ This date is universally accepted. Godard, op. cit., p. 1103, says that the dedicatory celebrations were "attended by Shaykh Safī of Ardabil and Shaykh 'Ala ad-dawla of Simnān".
¹⁶⁵ See G. Le Strange (tr.), *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (Leyden and London, 1919), pp. 61–2.

¹⁶⁶ Another contemporary Arabic source, al-'Umārī, (d. 749/1349) has been edited and translated by K. Lech, *Das*

Mongolische Weltreich (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 149, 150–1 (German), 86, 88–9 (Arabic).

¹⁶⁷ D'Ohsson, op. cit., p. 487; Howorth, op. cit., p. 582.

¹⁶⁸ I shall retain the name by which the historians refer to Öljeitü in the sources.

¹⁶⁹ Girdkūh is well-known as a former Ismā'īlī fortress in Dailam, cf. P. Schwarz, *Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographien* (Leipzig 1896–1926), p. 818, and G. Le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1905), p. 221, n. 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Nihāyat al-Arab*, Cairo Dār al-Kutub MS, ma'ārif 'amma 549, XXV, pp. 133–4.

¹⁷¹ A fragment exists for the years 733–38/1332–38; see Little, "The Recovery of a Lost Source for Bahri Mamlūk History", *JAOS* XCIV (1974), pp. 42–54.

¹⁷² *Iqd al-Jumān*, Istanbul Topkapı MS 2912/4, fols. 306b–307b.

¹⁷³ Godard, op. cit., p. 1105.

occasion, to flatter the Il-Khans and was primarily interested in informing and entertaining his readers in almost equal measure. It is only by keeping this dual intention in mind that we can appreciate the significance of his report.

Al-Yūsufī, to whom al-‘Ainī refers as “*Ṣāhib Sīrat al-Nāṣir*”, credits Kharbandā with the original founding of Sulṭāniyya and dates this event in the year 713/1313–14, in the brief course of which the vast city apparently sprang up, practically overnight. The reasons for Kharbandā’s selection of the site upon which Sulṭāniyya was built al-Yūsufī unfolds in a story,¹⁷⁴ the nature of which is familiar to readers of romance and fairy tales, whereby a man lost in a wild and barren land stumbles upon a fabulous place. The story centres upon a great hunting party which Kharbandā is alleged to have led into “a vast steppe (*barriyya wāsi‘a*)”, which contained much game. Mounted on a marvellous Gilānī horse (*ikdīsh*) and accompanied by his commander-in-chief Jūbān, Kharbandā stipulated that no weapons were to be used in the hunt and that the animals had to be caught by hand (*bi’l-qabḍ bi’l-yad*). His amirs were amazingly successful at this sport, but Kharbandā far surpassed them, capturing no less than 150 beasts in a single day, thanks largely to his indefatigable *ikdīsh*, though al-Yūsufī permits himself a “God knows best (*wa-llāhu a‘lam*)” to express his scepticism at this feat. The hunting party remained in the steppe for a number of days before they set out for Tabriz, and on the way Kharbandā “went astray (*rāgha*), and, lo, he found himself in a place with much water and pasturage. When he saw it he was exceedingly pleased and said, ‘This place has no equal in all the world!’ Then he said to Jūbān and the amirs, ‘By God, I have an idea!’ ‘What is it?’ they asked. ‘I want to build a city in this place, the most beautiful on earth, which will be the empress of the land (*sulṭānat al-bilād*)!’”

I have retold the story at greater length than it deserves only to illustrate the lengths to which al-Yūsufī went to embellish it, providing names of actual persons, dialogue, details of an exceptional hunt, a description of Kharbandā’s horse, etc., all of which was undoubtedly intended to lend both colour and verisimilitude to what is probably a complete fabrication. And yet, like most legends, this one, crude as it may seem, probably contains at least a kernel of truth when it attributes the choice of the site largely to chance. For even if it was well endowed with water and pasturage—and this is debatable¹⁷⁵—why build a city in the middle of a vast steppe? Such at any rate is the judgement of Godard, who points out that Sulṭāniyya was not built on a natural site: “It sprang up to meet the whim of a powerful sovereign, but he could not make sure that it would last because it had no logical reason for existence. The wide plains, the rich pastures, the abundance of game, the temperate climate, personal preference, were reason enough for building a holiday residence like Arghūn’s, but a city must be founded on commercial prosperity.”¹⁷⁶

Having told his story, al-Yūsufī descends to a more prosaic level in order to describe the construction of the city, though even here he retains some of the devices of the storyteller, inventing snatches of dialogue, for example, to keep his readers’ interest. This section is worth reproducing in full.

The Construction of Sulṭāniyya by Kharbandā

The narrator [al-Yūsufī] says: Thereupon he sent a messenger to Tabriz and Baghdad and all the cities and seats of his land in search of artisans and engineers (*muhandisīn*). Before long they came into his presence and he told them, “I want you to build a city here which will have no equal on earth, so that I will be remembered by it for all time.” “We hear and obey” they replied, “but you should provide us with ample funds and many men.”

The narrator said: He opened the treasuries and distributed money to all the artisans and to everyone who worked on his behalf, for tools and supplies. Among the artisans who had come were Jews and Christians from Mosul and elsewhere, to whom he said, “I want you to build this city according to the specifications and plans of Damascus, Syria (*‘alā ṣifāt Dimashq al-Shām wa-waḍ‘ihā*), but my city is to be more beautiful than it.” “We hear and obey,” they said.

¹⁷⁴ *‘Iqd al-Jum‘an*, fols. 306b–307a.

¹⁷⁵ Mustaufī, in Le Strange, op. cit., p. 61, reports that “its water is taken from wells and underground channels, and is of a digestive quality. The wells are from two or three, up to ten, ells in depth.” Al-‘Umarī, in Lech, op. cit., p. 88 (Arabic),

says that “Sulṭāniyya abounds with fruit and water.” But Godard, op. cit., p. 1105, claims that it “had an inadequate water supply.”

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

The narrator says: Then they began to dig the moat (*khandaq*) and foundations (*asāsāt*). Rashīd al-Dawla acted as supervisor of construction (*mushiddan* 'alā 'l-'imāra). The total of those who worked on the foundations was 10,000 men. Ten thousand moved dirt, and 5,000 cut and dressed stone. There were 1500 wagons to move rock and other materials, for which there were 10000 donkeys. They made 1000 kilns for brick (*ṭūb*) and 1000 kilns for lime (*jīr*). Five thousand camels transported wood, and 2000 persons were assigned to cut wood from the mountains and other places. Three thousand smiths were employed to work sheets of metal (*ṣafā'iḥ*), windows (*shabābik*), nails, and the like. There were 5000 carpenters, and 5000 men laid marble. Supervisors were appointed over them to urge them on in the work. It was not long before the buildings had risen and the workers had arched the vaults, built the houses, palaces and baths, and had prepared the canals into which they ran large amounts of water. They remained there for a time, until the city had been completed and had emerged in a beautiful form, wonderful and rare. When they had finished they came to Kharbandā and informed him. He entered the city, amazed, and was greatly pleased, saying, "This is what I had in mind!" Then he bestowed robes of honour on all the masters (*al-mu'allimīn*), labourers and artisans and then summoned all the amirs and the whole army for a banquet. "What shall we name this city, O amirs?" "Sulṭāniyya", they said. Then he had it proclaimed that people should move there, and they did so from every place and took up residence there. They liked it, preferring it to all the rest of the land. Merchants and travellers came there and set up estates (*'amarū dīyā'*) around the city, planting orchards and all kinds of trees. Kharbandā summoned Rashīd al-Dawla¹⁷⁷ and named him governor (*ḥākīman*), entrusting him with the affairs of the people, saying, "Everything that you do be on your neck! I am free of it." The fame of Kharbandā spread throughout the land for justice and beneficence.

I say: al-Sulṭāniyya is Qunghurlān. It is east of Tabriz, slightly to the south, a journey of eight days. When Kharbandā built it he made it the seat of his kingdom. It is near the mountains of Gilān, one day's journey away.

Kharbandā delighted in the city, and when he settled there the kings of the land sent messengers to him with gifts and curiosities, among which was a person sent by the king of Rūm, fifteen cubits tall. He understood no language and did not speak, but, when he was hungry, wept, and, when he was sated, laughed.¹⁷⁸

Several points deserve comment. First is the claim, apparently original with al-Yūsufī, and reproduced here for the first time, that Kharbandā imported non-Muslim artisans from Mosul to work at Sulṭāniyya. Although it stands to reason that artisans should have been imported to work at the site, al-Yūsufī is the only author to specify a venue and to reveal that Kharbandā, like many other Muslim sovereigns, had no compunctions about using Christians and Jews as workmen. More startling by far is the claim that Kharbandā wanted Sulṭāniyya to be built according to the plan of Damascus. Why, one wonders, since there is no evidence that he ever visited Damascus, though his predecessor certainly did, in 699/1299–1300 as its conqueror, and it is known that a suburb of Tabriz built by Ghāzān, said to rival Persepolis "in variety, organization and magnitude", was named Shām-i-Ghāzān'.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps, therefore, Damascus was considered by the Il-Khans to be the epitome of Muslim urban grandeur which Kharbandā hoped to surpass. But why should Christians and Jews from Mosul be expected to be familiar with the plan of Damascus? Indeed, is it likely that they were? Whether or not Damascus was actually the prototype for Sulṭāniyya is a question that can be answered, of course, only by archaeologists; on the basis of present evidence it would seem that the two cities had very little in common and that Sulṭāniyya was, in fact, closer in plan and appearance to Shām-i-Ghāzān, which was also a vast complex of buildings dominated by a mausoleum.¹⁸⁰ A second point to note is that some of al-Yūsufī's details regarding the construction and the materials used can be verified. It is known, for example, that there was a *khandaq* surrounding the entire wall of the famous mausoleum which Kharbandā had constructed in the city.¹⁸¹ Whether or not there was another moat surrounding the walls of the city itself is another question which archaeologists might explore. The need for vast quantities of brick and plaster is certainly attested by the extant ruins at Sulṭāniyya, for, in spite of the observations of Mustaufī and Clavijo that buildings were constructed "of stone walls faced with

¹⁷⁷ I.e. the vizier and historian Rashīd al-Dīn.

¹⁷⁸ *Iqd al-Jumān*, fols. 306b–307a.

¹⁷⁹ A. U. Pope, *Persian Architecture* (New York 1965), p. 171.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Pope, "The Fourteenth Century", *Survey* II, p. 1062.

faience tiles", the remains prove that the traditional Persian materials were used.¹⁸² The reference to the large number of blacksmiths needed to make "sheet metal" and windows is supported by a report that the doors of the mausoleum were "made of polished and damascened steel", and that the windows were faced with "rich iron grills".¹⁸³ The need for dressed stone is certainly evident if it is true that the citadel was surrounded by a square wall, each side of which was 500 *gaz* long, thick enough for four horsemen to ride abreast upon; moreover, a nineteenth century traveller observed a forty-foot high wall, twelve feet thick, "built of fine large square masses of hewn stone".¹⁸⁴ It is known that the court of the royal palace was paved with marble.¹⁸⁵ Though it is not necessary to accept al-Yūsufi's numbers at face value, they are by no means unreasonable for a project of such magnitude, especially if it was carried out over a period of eight years. Third, it should be noted that while al-Yūsufi's judgement that the immigrants to the city liked their new abode is at odds with al-Nuwairi's contrary report, it is possible to reconcile the two accounts if we assume that the city met with a mixed reaction from its inhabitants.¹⁸⁶ Finally, there is the question of the sources which al-Yūsufi used for this passage. First, however, it should be pointed out that the passage introduced by "I say" seems to be an interpolation by al-'Ainī, which he borrowed almost verbatim from Abu 'l-Fidā's *Taqwīm al-Buldān*.¹⁸⁷ Otherwise, the rest of the passage may be assumed to originate with al-Yūsufi, whose commendable habit it was to name his sources, many of whom were eye witnesses of the events they described. The fact that no source is mentioned here may well result from an excision by the editor, al-'Ainī. In this instance a clue to the possible identity of the source is provided by a contemporary historian Mufaḍḍal b. Abi 'l-Faḍā'il, who though he mentions nothing about the founding of Sulṭāniyya, does repeat, in almost the same language, the report on the mute giant presented to Kharbandā by the Byzantine emperor. This report, Mufaḍḍal writes, came from the viceroy of al-Raḥba, who had it on the authority of one Sunqur al-Bārūjī: *wa-fihā waṣala min al-nā'ib bi'l-Raḥba muṭāla'a yudhkar fihā anna Sunqur al-Bārūjī akhbāra annahu . . .*¹⁸⁸ Thus, given the similarity of the language used by Mufaḍḍal and al-Yūsufi and without going into the question of who borrowed from whom, it would seem that the ultimate source for at least part of al-Yūsufi's report was this second or third-hand information from the Mongol court by way of the viceroy of al-Raḥba. In any case, it is abundantly clear that either al-Yūsufi or his source or sources had a muddled impression of the founding of Sulṭāniyya in which some facts were telescoped and others mixed with fiction.

This estimate is only reinforced by the remainder of the material which al-Yūsufi records about Kharbandā and Sulṭāniyya in the annal for 713. In two fanciful anecdotes, Sulṭāniyya retreats into the background as the setting for feats performed by Kharbandā. In the first we learn only that it was the Il-Khan's custom to go to the outskirts of the city in order to practice shooting golden pellets which his subjects were allowed to keep if they succeeded in retrieving them.¹⁸⁹ The second anecdote casts Kharbandā in the unlikely role of a humble ruler who becomes a Sulṭāniyya tradesman for a day, in this case a cook, donning an apron and forcing his amirs to buy the cook's food at an exorbitant price. This display of humility inspires his wife, Bulghān Khātūn, to visit the restaurant in disguise and to buy a portion of food in exchange for a priceless ruby inherited from Ghāzān. Having sold all the food, Kharbandā retires to a bath where his ablutions are interrupted by a servant who announces to him the birth of a son, to which Kharbandā responds as follows:

"You have brought me good tidings in a new bath and a new city. This, God willing, is a sign of good fortune (*ṭāli'a bi-sa'd sa'id*)!" Thereupon he left the bath and entered his castle where he gave banquets, sending out alms and proclaiming throughout the land that everyone, both great and small, should attend the banquet. They remained for seven days, eating and drinking. Kharbandā rejoiced and named the child Abū Sa'id.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² Godard, op. cit., pp. 113-14.

¹⁸³ Howorth, op. cit., p. 582.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ D'Ohsson, op. cit., p. 486.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. al-'Umari, in Lech, op. cit., p. 86 (Arabic), who reports that Kharbandā attracted people to Sulṭāniyya from many countries "through justice and beneficence; it is at present so heavily populated that it would seem that it had been in

existence for hundreds of years".

¹⁸⁷ *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, ed. M. Reinaud et M. MacGuckin de Slane (Paris, 1840), p. 407.

¹⁸⁸ *Histoire des sultans mamelouks*, ed. E. Blochet, in *Patrologia orientalis* (Paris, 1919-29), pp. 739-40.

¹⁸⁹ *Iqd al-Jumān*, fol. 307a.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., fol. 307b.

Thus al-Yūsufi compounds error upon error. Vaguely aware, perhaps, that the destruction of Sulṭāniyya was connected with the birth of a son to Kharbandā but not sure of the details, al-Yūsufi elected to invent a colourful story which purports to show through an improbable series of events how Abū Saʿīd received his name. Admittedly the wealth of error and invention evident in al-Yūsufi's narrative does little to inspire our confidence in the reliability of any of his data on the founding of Sulṭāniyya and leads us to the conclusion that if there is any accuracy in his report it is purely accidental. Nevertheless, as I have tried to show, this Arabic source does contain some information on an Il-Khanid event which is worth critical consideration, and I would conclude with the reminder that Mamlūk sources, mainly the unpublished ones, are literally teeming with data on the Il-Khans which need to be collected, sifted, and weighed when their history is written. If I have understood Professor Boyle's remarks on Persian Il-Khanid historiography correctly, the situation is much the same as far as Persian sources are concerned.¹⁹¹

THE IMĀMZĀDA ḤUSAIN RIḌĀ AT VARĀMĪN

By Bernard O'Kane

Myron Smith in his publication of the stucco of the Imāmzāda Karrār at Buzūn¹⁹² wrote of the "strange contentment with artistic repetition" which the decoration there evinced. The present monument, dated 841/1437–38, displays a similar conservatism in provincial Timurid architecture. Despite its location in a cemetery on the periphery of Varāmīn (Fig. 12), this tomb tower seems to have escaped previous notice.

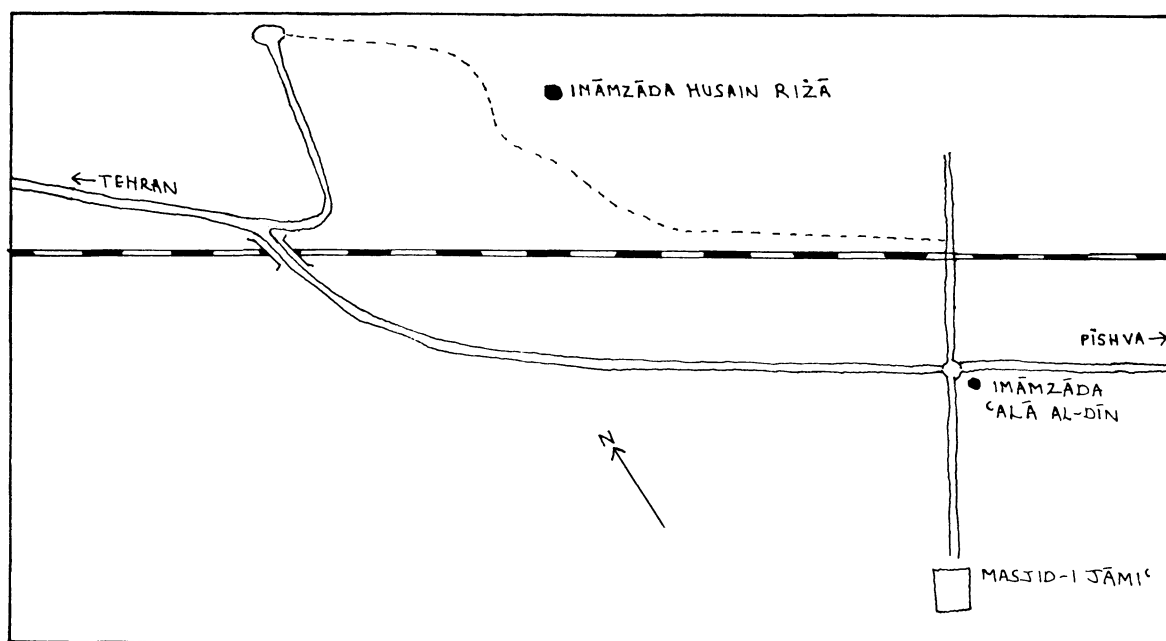


Fig. 12. Sketch-map of Vārāmīn, showing location of the Imāmzāda Ḥusain Riḍā.

¹⁹¹ J. A. Boyle, "Some Thoughts on the Sources for the Il-Khanid Period of Persian History", *Iran* XII (1974), 185–8.

¹⁹² M. Smith, "Imām Zāde Karrār at Buzūn, a dated Seldjūk Ruin", *AMI* VII (1935), p. 72.